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General and complete disarmament: confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. On 8 December 2005, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/64, entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context", by which, inter alia, it called upon Member States to refrain from the use or threat of use of force, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to pursue ways and means regarding confidence- and security-building measures, set out in the report of the Disarmament Commission at its 1993 session, through sustained consultations and dialogue, while at the same time avoiding actions that may hinder or impair such a dialogue. Furthermore, the Assembly urged States to comply strictly with all bilateral, regional and international agreements, including arms control and disarmament agreements, to which they are party. The Assembly also encouraged the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures, with the consent and participation of the parties concerned, to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its sixty-first session, containing the views of Member States on confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. On 28 February 2006, a note verbale was sent to all Member States requesting their views. Replies received to date are reproduced in section II below. Any further replies received will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from States

Bolivia

[Original: Spanish]

1. General Assembly resolution 60/64, adopted on 8 December 2005 reaffirms the establishment of ways and means regarding confidence- and security-building measures.

2. Bolivia considers that confidence-building measures are essential in order to achieve peace in the region as a contribution thereto at the global level. Such measures should be implemented and publicized for the attention of all Member States.

3. It should be noted that confidence-building measures should be structured around the principles of transparency, verification, understanding and mutual cooperation so as to create a climate conducive to closer political and economic ties between countries in the region.

4. Bolivia remains firmly convinced that any problems that arise between States in the region must be settled peacefully. Confidence-building measures are therefore reflected in actions aimed at helping to reduce or eliminate causes or threats of conflict through a greater openness to confidence-building and security arrangements and undertakings on the part of States, thereby creating a climate of mutual cooperation and the defence of common interests, as in the European Union.

5. Bolivia pursues a foreign policy of peaceful coexistence, understanding and cooperation with the countries of the region.

6. At the subregional level, Bolivia is firmly committed to the Declaration of San Francisco de Quito, signed on 12 July 2004 whereby the States members of the Andean Community undertook to establish an Andean Zone of Peace comprising the territories, airspace and waters under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela as a zone free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and anti-personnel mines in which the necessary conditions will be developed to permit the peaceful and agreed solution of conflicts of any nature whatsoever as well as the causes thereof.

7. Accordingly, the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations should pursue this initiative to secure the commitment and compliance of all the Member States.

Mauritius

[Original: English]
[20 June 2006]

The Republic of Mauritius, as a member of the United Nations, fully supports its action aimed at promoting and maintaining international peace and security for the benefit of all people, without discrimination.

1. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/64 on confidence-building measures in the region, and subregional context from 2001 to 2002, a team from the Mauritius Police Force participated in the technical support, financial and logistics aid programme in the Comoros Islands to help promote peace and security on those islands. Moreover, Mauritius actively participates in regional and subregional committees such as the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean Commission, devoted to economic and social development. The Mauritius Police Force is a member of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO) and Interpol, wherein much effort is being deployed to streamline policing standards and upholding human rights in the region.

Pakistan

[Original: English]
[7 June 2006]

1. General Assembly resolution 60/64, entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context", which was adopted by consensus, emphasizes that the objective of confidence-building measures (CBMs) should be to help strengthen international peace and security and be consistent with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments. It also encourages the promotion of bilateral and regional CBMs to avoid conflict and prevent unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities.

2. CBMs can contribute significantly to strengthening peace and security and to promoting trust among States. However, in order to fully appreciate the need for CBMs, the principles on which they should be based, the conditions for their effectiveness and the roles of the international community and the United Nations Secretary-General, it would be helpful to ask a few relevant questions and answer them logically, as follows:

What is the need for adopting CBMs?

3. The following provide the rationale for CBMs:

- Tensions at the regional and subregional levels constitute the main source of instability;
- Regional tensions contribute to the arms race, endangering not only international peace and security, but also undermining efforts aimed at arms control and disarmament;
- Regional tensions and the arms race obstruct peaceful settlement of disputes, extend poverty and spread despair and anger. The acquisition of military arsenals beyond legitimate security requirements is the prime cause of economic debilitation;
- By lowering tensions through CBMs and the peaceful settlement of disputes, States can devote their resources and energies to the socio-economic advancement of their people. Such an approach could also supplement efforts for arms control and disarmament, since most threats to peace and security in the post-cold war era arise mainly among States located in the same region or subregion;
- Effective disarmament and arms limitation measure that directly limit or reduce military potential have a particularly high confidence-building value.

What principles should form the basis for CBMs?

4. Confidence-building measures should be undertaken in conformity with principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular the following:

- Pacific settlement of disputes, under Chapter VI;
- Renunciation of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State;
- Non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of States;
- Sovereign equality of States and self-determination of peoples under foreign occupation and domination.

What are the conditions under which CBMs are most effective?

5. Confidence-building measures are most effective when:

- CBMs are pursued in parallel with earnest efforts for the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Without progress towards eliminating underlying causes of disputes and mistrust between States, the utility of confidence-building measures will be limited;
- There is sincerity and a genuine desire to lower tensions and settle disputes peacefully;
- Open consultations and dialogue in the regions of tension and conflict take place without preconditions;
- CBMs help to manage conflict and lead to conflict resolution;

- Restraint is exercised, including in the acquisition of arms. Massive acquisition of arms and weapon systems by one of the States in a region or parties to CBMs would constitute a destabilizing development and undermine the process of CBMs;

- A regional arms race stops through the achievement of security at the lowest level of armaments;

- CBMs encourage maintenance of military balance among the regional States in the acquisition, development and deployment of various weapon systems;

- There is strict compliance with bilateral, regional and international arms control and disarmament agreements to which the concerned States are parties;

- A comprehensive approach is pursued with CBMs in the political, military, economic, social, humanitarian and cultural fields;

- The appropriate mix of different types of CBMs is determined for each region by the countries of the region themselves.

Poland

[Original: English]
[1 May 2006]

1. Polish policy on conventional arms control plays an important role in security policy at the regional and subregional levels. Poland is a party to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The Treaty has established a secure and stable balance of conventional armed forces in Europe based on peaceful cooperation. Therefore, it has become and remains the cornerstone of security and stability in Europe, in terms of the reduction of tensions owing to the accumulation of weapons through arms control at the regional level and of greater stability through confidence-building, transparency, predictability and information exchange among States parties to the Treaty.

2. Poland is also a party of the Treaty on Open Skies, which establishes a programme of unarmed aerial surveillance flights over the entire territory of its participants. It is designed to enhance mutual understanding and confidence by giving all participants, regardless of their size, a direct role in gathering information about military forces and activities of concern to them and is one of the most wide-ranging international efforts to date promoting openness and transparency of military forces and activities. Poland also participates in other conventional arms-control agreements concluded within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, including the Vienna Document 1999 of the negotiations on confidence and security-building measures, which is designed to promote mutual trust and dispel concern about military activities by encouraging openness and transparency. Its provisions regarding the exchange and verification of military information on participating States' armed forces, their defence policies and military activities, including the size of defence budgets, the location, size and strength of military units and formations, the exchange of annual calendars and prior notification of certain military activities, as well as observation of certain military activities, increase transparency and confidence by promoting broader and more comprehensive cooperation among States on the regional and subregional levels.

3. As a member of the European Union (EU) the Republic of Poland meets its obligations in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, such as the European Union programme for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in conventional arms and the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. All above-mentioned agreements and initiatives constitute an essential element of cooperation aimed at European security and will continue to remain an important tool for strengthening security as long as military and security risks exist, although they may be different in nature and scope from those of the past.

4. We attach great importance to regional confidence- and security-building measures. Bilateral measures undoubtedly contribute to an increase in transparency, openness, confidence and security and to the establishment and strengthening of good neighbourly relations and cooperation in the field of security and arms control. Good examples of successful cooperation on the subregional level are: the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on Complementary Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, signed in April 2004, and the Set of Confidence- and Security-Building Measures Complementary to the Vienna Document of 1999 adopted by the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Poland, signed in July 2004. The aim of these agreements is the expansion of bilateral military cooperation as a contribution to further strengthening confidence, good neighbourliness and security in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. It can be achieved by, among others: inviting observers to the military activities specified in the agreements conducted by formations and units of the armed forces, holding annual meetings to work out recommendations aimed at the improvement of the implementation of the measures mentioned in the agreements and to assess their implementation.

5. Poland, with its positive experience in the implementation of the European conventional arms-control regime, strongly encourages other Member States that have not already done so to begin negotiations on these kinds of agreements. We are strongly convinced that strengthening and expanding regional and subregional cooperation among States and the implementation of existing bilateral and multilateral agreements to which they are parties contribute to further strengthening confidence between them and security on regional and subregional levels and within the United Nations community as a whole. For our part, we are ready to share with interested States our experience gained during the negotiation and implementation of above-mentioned conventional arms-control agreements.

Suriname

[Original: English]
[14 June 2006]

1. Suriname promotes the peaceful settlement of disputes.

2. The Ministry of Defence and the Suriname Armed Forces work in accordance with regulations which define their policy.

3. Suriname is party to various international conventions concerning disarmament issues such as:

(a) the Chemical Weapons Convention, as of 30 April 1997;

(b) the Biological Weapon Convention, 6 January 1993;

(c) the Non-Proliferation Treaty, 30 June 1976;

(d) the Treaty of Tlatelolco, 7 June 1997;

(e) the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty 9 April 1993.

The Ministry of Defence in concert with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is responsible for reporting on obligations under these treaties. Suriname does not possess any weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical, biological).

4. The Suriname Armed Forces are the only entity that possess conventional weapons. Suriname presented its list of conventional weapons to the United Nations in 1992 and has since then reported on a regular basis in the form of a nil report, because there haven't been any new purchases.

5. With regards to foreign military education and training programmes, Suriname has bilateral agreements with:

- France on the exchange of military personnel for regular and advanced training and jungle warfare courses
- Netherlands: e.g. jungle warfare courses
- The United States:

  a. The International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program provides training in the United States and in some cases in overseas United States military facilities to selected foreign military and related civilian personnel on a grant basis;

  b. Joint Cooperation Exercise and Training (JCET) consists of activities where United States soldiers go to a foreign country to do training exercises in cooperation with the military in that country;

  c. Trade Winds, where funds are allocated for military training in the Caribbean;

  d. Traditional Commanders Activities (TCA) consist of funds to conduct military-to-military contacts and comparable activities that are designed to encourage a more democratic orientation by defence establishments and military forces in other countries;

  e. Peacekeeping Operations (PKO): United States military together with soldiers from other countries do peacekeeping operations. Suriname participates in peacekeeping exercise programmes of the United States but not in peacekeeping operations at the present time. With regards to the casualties in Haiti (1995) Suriname participated in a United Nations peacekeeping operation as part of the contingent from the Netherlands;

- Brazil: education and training;
- Indonesia: education and training;
- Venezuela: education and training.

6. Suriname has bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries on border security to put an end to the smuggling of goods, illegal border-crossings, etc. With regards to this matter there is a river patrol on a regular basis between French Guyana and Suriname on the Marowijne River (border between Suriname and

French Guyana) and there are talks with Brazil on how to secure the southern border of Suriname.

7. Suriname is party to the Ottawa Convention on mines since 1 November 2002. During the internal war in 1986 a number of landmines were laid within the national territory. Approximately 1,000 landmine have been removed. The initial demining operation consisted of an international effort supported by the Governments of Guyana and Brazil, which donated demining equipment with the financial support of Holland. The mine clearance activities were conducted by members of the Suriname Armed Forces, technically supported by members of the Brazilian army and supervised and assisted by the Organization of American States Booby traps, weapons and mines were destroyed, allowing the former inhabitants to return to their homes. The complete mine clearing operation in the remaining mine field in Suriname (to be exact, Stolkertsijver in the Commewijne district) was begun by the Suriname Armed Forces together with the Honduran Army in the period from November to December 2004. Today, Suriname is mine-free.

8. Suriname is party to the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and the Proliferation of and Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects. In that regard, it is important to note that Suriname does not have any arms industries. It imports its firearms, their components and ammunition. Suriname has a long history of strict firearms control legislation. It consists of norms, standards and legislation which includes import, export and trans-shipment control of firearms, their components and ammunition. Control on the sale of firearms, licence requirements for dealers and users, record requirements for sales, prohibition provisions for certain types of arms and strict penalties for illegal possession or firearms misuse.

9. Suriname is in the category of small island States because of its relatively small population, small economy and industrial capacity, low gross domestic product and long borders, which can lead to special security concerns such as drug-related activities, illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, transnational crime and terrorism. However, Suriname has the ability to develop into a growing economy because of its richness in national recourses. Suriname is party to various anti-terrorism conventions including The Hague Convention and the Montreal Convention and Protocol, the Tokyo Convention, the Inter-American Convention against the Taking of Hostages and the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism. Suriname has also implemented an airport and seaport security code.